

FANTASY

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PITTSBURGH

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FANTASY



FANTASY—*A Poetry Quarterly*

EDITED BY STANLEY DEHLER MAYER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are sorry that we are unable at this time to announce the recipient of the ten dollar "Sleep" prize, owing to unusual difficulties in securing the services of a judge. However, in recognition of the many fine entries received, we are offering, through the kindness of a California gentleman, a second prize of two dollars. Both poems will appear in the Autumn number.

In the meantime—for the Winter number—the poetry topic is to be "The Ocean", "The Sea", or a similar theme. The length limit is thirty lines, form may be what you will, the closing date November 15th, and the prize five dollars. And—please—no paraphrases of *Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!*

Joseph Joel Keith of Hollywood writes us that he had great difficulty in deciding on the recipient of the book he had planned as a reward for the best poem in our Spring issue. The judgment finally narrowed down to two so nearly equal in quality in Mr. Keith's opinion that he resolved on a runner-up prize to the second winner. Accordingly, the first award, *The Garment of Praise*, was made to LeGarde S. Doughty for his long ballad, "Sable and Marigold"; the second award, a copy of G. Laurence Groom's *The Singing Sword*, was made to Carl Edwin Burklund for "Mercy in the Night".

*With this issue Fantasy becomes dedicated and forever
indebted to William C. Mayer—a brother whose
time and kindly assistance, at all times
gratuitously given, have many times
enabled us to continue.*

PRELUDE TO INTERLUDE

HARRY ROSKOLENKIER

This is the hour of the swift keen incision;
the daylight is swiftly turning—
the sun is filtering
over the tall western towers of air:
on the doorbell
hang the sediments of my heart.
We are done, at last with this *love*.
In the stillness of our minds
we now depart . . .

I look! there from the opaque wall—you stare at me:
I think perhaps the frown
no longer looks so sad,
laced in the frigid brown of your eyes.
No longer, tonight, will you be there!
Between my fingers—I will slowly tear
(the heart is torn) there remains the eyes, its face—and hair!

Let it be like murder—just as swift!
one cry of pain, and on the checkered floor—
a thing for feet to walk upon. Through the door
will come minute new lives; and the swift
tingle of the bell, with the inciseness
of plunging knives, are things in store.
Let the feet, the curious elemental wings of ours
take to the silent streets; the quiet snow avenues
of winter can bear our iced defeats . . .

THE DEATH OF LOVE

LEO A. QUINN

Tall man . . .
flitting blackly in the street,
and gazing in the yellow window-pane . . .

While in the dark church
an ugly dwarf grins . . .
and tolls an iron bell:

Pale flower in the July heat,
that which the midget blew upon,
shriveled and turned to black frost:

It remains, in marble vase, gray ashes . . .

Flying widespread in the city streets:
the part that was not caught.

THE WHISPERIN' GIFT

JOHN RICHARD MORELAND

Men say old Martha Babbington
Possesses the dark 'whisperin' gift';
Claim her low spoken words will run—
Like wind or fire through a rift—
Straight to the goal. The Negroes come
At noon—but never dark o' night—,
To have her whisper and their home
Be free of some old conjure-blight.

Her house is full of spider webs,
A black crouches near the door
Through which a strange and dark scent ebbs
From a great pot of things obscure
That simmers on the hearth. Within
One corner hangs a curious broom,
A hat, a cloak as dark as sin,
That seems to flutter in the gloom.

A silver fee and Martha goes
In a small closet built of oak
And quietly whispers. No one knows
Just how the whisperin' does its work,
But some thief suddenly reveals the spot
Of his ill-gotten, hidden wealth;
A brand-new barn begins to rot,
Or some sick child regains its health.

She lays a wish upon the soil
And plowshares break; rank, useless weeds
Are wages for the laborer's toil
Regardless of his urgent needs.
The hens refuse to lay, and cows
Somehow forget to clave in spring,
And lovers—who forget their vows—
Remember at her whispering.

WIDOW'S LITANY

FRANK ANKENBRAND, JR.

The green canary of my heart
Sits within its scarlet cage
Where hang the lifeless hulls
Of words in festoons gray.
They once were clad in song and rhythms,
But now they hang in tattered ribbons.
There is about my heart a path,
Worn thin by the padded feet of Death,
A green eyed cat that stalks
The bird within that cannot sing.

drifting
 again
 silent curtain closed and in a moment reeds
 that quiet brook along with me
 stillness
 of sleep and shadows lifting
 to gleam of jade and silver
 now tomorrow
 and tasks and sorrow
 are not when winding paths
 find the opal water stealing
 where it often led before often
 before . . .
 interval
 hold
 this way is
 timeless
 I shall never lose never
 lose . . .

BALLAD OF A VIRGIN

KATHLEEN SUTTON

When I was a small lass,
 Timid and alone,
 I built me a castle
 Stone by stone.

I shut out the wild beasts
 Prowling in the glen;
 I shut out the laughters
 Of strange young men.

And when it was finished
 I sat in the tower
 Gazing into heaven,
 Hour after hour.

Till one who espied me
 Climbed the ivied wall
 And said: "Aren't you coming
 Down again at all?"

He said: "The stars of heaven
 Are beautiful, it's true,
 But flesh and blood is splendor
 Enough for you."

His hair was like night,
 His eyes were dark fire—
 Oh, I would have given him
 Every desire.

But the walls were strong;
 I could not escape,
 However I struggled,
 To love or to rape.

And when he was gone
 I knelt by the bars,
 Cheated of heaven
 By its own stars.

CYCLOID

GEORGE F. MEETER

I

That which Is, is me.
Before thought was I.
After all stilled cry
Still ought I to be.

I, both cry and thought;
All that has unrolled,
All that will be told:
I am what is sought.

Where the abyss lies
There I once began,
Then to summits ran
With all things that rise.

From the infinite sink,
Black and still and dead,
To what is, instead,
I am still the link.

In the womb of Time
I must be the breath.
Out of life and death
Still I, in the slime.

If I stirred there slower
Here I flash like light,
Yet with each new height
Seek for something lower.

Here I stir in man,
Here as well in woman
And what's less than human:
All things do I span.

Yet must all spans shatter,
Since I am not whole
Ever in one soul,
Dead or living matter.

Though they rest in me,
Though I am the core,
Here can be, no more,
One Identity.

In me consciousness,
In me pits unseen,
Yet with life between
Do I seem the less.

For in life I move
Out of unity,
From infinity,
Breaking that first groove;

And in making fast
Some small part to each
Cannot now outreach
Time and space more vast.

If while there the Whole,
Here I clearly see
Only what can be
Gathered in one soul.

One that draws from one;
Two that always stay
Two, and never may
Fuse, then quicker run.

Everywhere I'm riven,
Fixed to part and part;
Neither root nor start
But with what I live in.

II

Thus too, fluid foam,
I begin in being
That which stirs unseeing
In a quicker womb.

Yet—when it starts hence,
Watery darkness leaving,
Reaching and perceiving,
Knowing breath and sense,

Then what unalloyed
Division will be made
Of what comes, or stayed
Back in colorless void?

In the too close fold
Of maternal cavern
Sight, I know, was given
Of some wider mould.

Sight that there went free
Till opaqueness dense
Dropped and stopped all sense
Of continuity.

There in very birth
All seemed won and lost;
Gravity but tossed
What remained to earth

Out of spheres and space,
Out of space unguessed,
Here to let it rest
In this newer place.

Here where thoughts and dreams,
Growing with the strain
Of soul to life, maintain
Life in fresher streams.

Here where dreams can soar
Ever higher—yet
Touched with earth, forget
What was known before.

*Where then through this fine
Pulsating outward surge
In which so much could merge
Was a dividing line?*

Green jungles now I know,
Glistening waterfalls;
Piled up city walls
Against the sunset's glow.

Long low roll of plains,
Slow vast heave of stars;
Seasons' avatars
Born with snows and rains.

All that sense can seize:
Hollow roar of surf,
Offshore smell of turf
Mingling with the breeze.

Flight of birds on wings
Both of flesh and metal;
Beauty in a petal:
These and countless things.

Knew I as much before,
Too different to be brought
Across some point that naught
But Time and Space ignore?

III

In me consciousness
Still stirs through the whole;
Yet, with older soul,
Shrinks as soul grows less.

Shrinks though distant doom
Once raised unawares,
Sinks through sentient layers
Downward to the tomb.

Subtle memories wane:
Sad mad music's playing;
Love, too quickly slaying
Pleasure that was pain.

Green jungles that I've known,
Waterfalls and sun:
All too soon has run
With some mist new flown.

All that soul enjoyed
Here at last spins free;
Exit can but be
Exit from a void.

And thought, too far from dreams,
Sifts through what has passed,
Yet with stronger cast
Of soul to death—it seems

CYCLOID—continued

Even now can see
Something that's beyond
And too soon respond
To what is to be.

Where then through this fine
Pulsating outward surge
From verge to newer verge
Is one dividing line?

Will some last blind drop
Now too finally?
Continuity
Reach a fuller stop?

Out through circling space,
In and out of time,
New rings ever climb
Old rings to efface.

Then, too quick for death
Part of *this* soul might
Find, by just so slight
A margin as a breath,

That prescient spatial glow;
Thus transcending gloom
Of none too fatal tomb
Some newer womb to know!

LOVE IS A STRONG WIND

HELEN FRAZEE-BOWER

Bent as the twig is
The tree is inclined:
Youth is a frail bough,
Love is the wind.

Love is a strong wind,
Witness the token:
Acres of old trees,
Twisted and broken.

WIND ON MY OWN LAND

CLIFFORD BRAGDON

Always a wind before me where I go
Over my own land, evening and morning.
A wind praying in the woods, a high wind
Outrageously cursing among the trees;
A low, mumbling wind riding on Deer Creek.
What you say has no order, only sound,
And I have been sorely stirred, like a boy
Hearing a sermon upon Penitence.
A wind forgotten, begging up the road;
A tired wind panting among the broomsage
Through the steep cut in Lonely Cedar Hill;
A little, mad wind in a pile of leaves.
Yet I am not troubled from this night forth.
What you say is only for the earth, Wind;
No puzzled echo longer in my heart.

PRETTY AS A GOOSEBERRY

By David Cornel DeJong

Mr. DeJong came to this country from The Netherlands at the age of thirteen, after the war. Starting to work at the age of fifteen, he worked for three years at everything imaginable, from soda jerking to grave digging. When nearly eighteen he decided he needed at least a high school education, so on to college, working his way through. Beginning to write in his junior year, Mr. DeJong saw his first three short stories accepted immediately; this was followed by acceptances of prose and poetry from every worthwhile paper in the country, among them Scribner's, Hound and Horn, American Caravan, Poetry, etc. He accepted a fellowship to Duke University, where he received his A. M., and went the following year on a fellowship to Brown University. His first novel, Belly Fulla Straw, is reviewed in this issue, and he is under contract by Knopf for two more, the next of which, tentatively called Unto Us a Son, is to come out this winter. It is interesting to remember that his college professors informed Mr. DeJong that he could never have good command of English. Now read "Pretty As a Gooseberry" and see for yourself.

IT was the hour before noon with the cucumber plants still firm and sturdy.

Mrs. Martin knew that soon the sun would be hard and long upon them, and they would start to look frayed and wilted. She regarded the plants momentarily with misgiving, shaking her broad head, and then she studied Mrs. Bucher again, who in the garden beyond the fence was pulling huge pigweeds from among the scrawny beans. Mrs. Martin's hands kept winding around the big potato she was peeling, each thick browned finger crawling expertly on, until she saw Mrs. Bucher rise. Then her mouth muttered something in the direction of the cat next to her which lay flat and slept. "Her pullin' them weeds she should have done five weeks ago. My gosh." She picked up another potato, pecked meticulously at the eyes, saw through her tumbled hair that Mrs. Bucher stood regarding her over the fence, so that she started to pout her thin lips and scold the cat again. "You lazy good for nothin', snoozing all morning in the sun."

Mrs. Bucher's body against the wire fence made it creak in warning, before she called, "Morning, Mrs. Martin. Thought I'd clean the beans a little." After this preamble the fence creaked

again. "Is he home yet, Mrs. Martin? Hadn't seen him around yet, so thought I'd ask. Is he?"

Mrs. Martin banged the tin with potatoes from her lap and was going to rise. But when she saw the woman's eager waiting, she picked the potatoes up again and grumbled, "No, he ain't home yet." She prodded the cat gently with her toes, even though her face was grim and menacing. "Get up, you lazy thing." Then raising her voice she shouted in the direction of Mrs. Bucher, "We're expecting him tonight." It hadn't even sounded as if she meant it, she accused herself. In disgust she shoved the potatoes away once more, and right in front of the other woman's politely unbelieving staring, she walked away to the henhouses. The cat languidly followed her stifflegged walk. "Got to see what those boys are doing all morning. My goodness, you lazy good-for-nothing." She waited for the cat. "Why don't that woman clean her beans anyway."

She hobbled through the deep ruts of the lane among the little loose feathers of the roosters her sons were killing. Getting broilers ready for the market, that's what they were doing. That Mrs. Bucher had made her forget. She

PRETTY AS A GOOSEBERRY—continued

paused and rubbed her nose vigorously with her apron, because she was smelling the nauseating warm blood odors. "East wind does it," she mumbled and went on toward her sons' talking, pressing her apron against her nose. The cat chased feathers.

They had not heard her come through all their talking. Two sturdy tan men, a pride to any mother, people told her. You don't appreciate them, Mrs. Martin. Nice, behaving, conscientious boys, keeping up the respect of the family, not even marrying. Beneath her feet the soggy straw seeped and her slippers started to feel wet. Three live young roosters were hanging on a low rafter, each one making soft creaky noises. Mrs. Martin watched her older son lift his blood stained hand toward the throat of each rooster. Deftly the big fingers made little cuts in each throat. The blood started to bead over the knife, over the man's hairy wrist, and then also over the eyes of the roosters. She watched them twitch, shudder, jerk a few times and then hang still, dripping, dripping, dripping, very red blood from all their whiteness. She shut her eyes, and pressed her apron more tightly. With her eyes shut she demanded somewhat fretfully, because her teeth seemed to be hard and cold against her tongue, "How many're you killing now? How many of them?"

They turned and saw her closed eyes and her nose and mouth covered by the apron. The one who had killed the roosters said, "What are you doing here? If it makes you sick, what do you come here for?"

After she had opened her eyes she said, "I just came around to look."

"If it makes you sick, why do you come around? Thought maybe you'd come to tell us the old man was home." The younger one shook his head sternly.

Again she ignored their hard staring and questioning, and grew uneasy. "That woman," she muttered, "That Mrs. Bucher comes to the fence and asks when's he coming home. I can't

stand it. Everybody nosing, saying when's he coming."

They laughed at her. "That's why you come running here. Even when you've got to smell blood. You know, ma, what we're gonna do when the old you've got to smell blood. You know, what?" The older son showed her the bloody blade. She pressed her apron to her mouth again. "See, what we ought to do? Slit his throat like a rooster's. Trouble is you couldn't sell him like a dead rooster." He laughed and his brother's laughter followed. "Worrying about the old good-for-nothing. Here's hoping they've got him in jail for a couple of months."

SHE hurried away from them. The cat did not follow her, but sat roundly in front of the entrails of a rooster. "It's your father," she said sternly, but carefully low so that they could not hear her. Nice big sturdy behaving sons. Never a drop of liquor, never a woman. She smelled blood again in a stirring of wind which blew feathers ahead of her. Let them laugh and treat her like a child. An old lumbering thick and heavy child, only good to peel potatoes. She saw Mrs. Bucher pull pig-weeds again. The potatoes waited for her on the porch, and still grumbling at them, she started to peel once more, her hands working fast and ceaselessly around the potatoes.

Mrs. Bucher's screendoor slammed, the chickens had run among the butter-beans, but she peeled on, not noticing anything, until the younger son came to the house with plucked fowls. He looked at the huge pailful of potatoes she had peeled and said, "Are you crazy? Are you peeling for an army or for the three of us?" Stubbornly she finished the potato she was doing, looked indignantly toward Mrs. Bucher's house and went toward the pump to wash the potatoes. "You kill your roosters and I'll attend to my business," she mumbled furiously, guilty because of the heap of potatoes she had peeled. Ten times too

many. They would hold it against her for weeks, nagging, tittering, scolding, just because she had been busy thinking and her hands had moved on.

A little later she was in the house swatting flies until she sat down by the window to watch sparrows wallow in the dust of the road. So she saw him come back, first the rusty Ford fenders, then the sparrows flying away, and before he had reached the driveway, she had already run on the porch and stood waving at him. But he drove the car into the elderberries on the corner and the engine sputtered to a stop. He cursed and then he clambered out swinging a crank, but when he looked up and saw her walk toward him, he stopped the whirling of the crank and smiled. "Catherine, my old dear," he shouted. "How are you? How have you been all these days. My, you look as pretty as a gooseberry."

She kept walking toward him, trying to keep her mouth fixed in a hard sore line and her eyes from crying. Calling her Catherine instead of Kate, she knew he had been drinking. But, pretty as a gooseberry, his face in smiles, soft silly words, suddenly she knew she was laughing, and crying also, and her laughter came cackling and hen-like, and then as if she were only sobbing, not laughing at all, and then she stood in front of him and he was patting her old big hard arms, the crank lying at his feet where he had dropped it. She listened to all his apologies, gravely now, all his explanations to which she should not listen. "You should have taken a clean shirt anyway," she scolded as if his going away like that had been planned and was the most expected thing to do. "Four days and only one shirt, you should be ashamed. You should be."

He cranked the car but could not get it started. She helped him push it out of the elderberries and weeds, and when the engine had started again, he kept on telling her why he had not come back sooner, yelling above the engine's roar, and she stood leaning against the door,

nodding, not listening at all. "How I've missed you, Catherine. Next time we'll take a trip, the both of us, a long trip." He had forgotten the money he had taken out of the cracked pitcher in the buttery. She smiled. "You're as pretty as a new gooseberry," he roared above the engine's more persistent roar.

His eyes were jovial, his face folded in smiling. It didn't matter where he had been and what he had done. He was telling her to get her hat and they'd go and have some beer. "Legal beer, as soft and sweet as tea. Harmless like baby's milk." She nodded and ambled back to the house, untying her apron on the way. She found her hat, and took her old purse from the knob of the green rocker, jangled it, and then looked with misgiving at her wide and shapeless slippers. Outdoors the car stood roaring near the elderberries, but he had followed her and stood on the porch watching her through the screendoor. "I've got to put on stockings and shoes," she protested and looked at him pleadingly.

"O, no you don't, Catherine. You don't. You're as pretty as a gooseberry as you are. Nobody's gonna look at your feet," he threatened gallantly.

IN the car she pushed the soiled cuffs of his shirt back and scolded him some more. He patted her arm. They stopped and had their beer in a little foul place with cuspidors all over, and a dirty white dog, and the man who served them pock marked and speaking broken English. A radio twanged Hawaiian music over them, but the beer—weak and soft as baby's milk—made her feel merry and reckless, so that she scolded him many times for his soiled shirt, and why he hadn't even taken a night shirt, and even enough money on his trip, while she wiped the beer he had drooled on his necktie with the clean cotton handkerchief she had taken along. This was no place for a lady, she knew, as she looked at four men playing cards at another table, but she kept on smiling and was happy, because he never even asked about his sons, the big burly con-

PRETTY AS A GOOSEBERRY---continued

scientious rooster-killing sons. When she had had her sixth glass she was tender and merry, until she looked at the clock and knew they had been there for hours. They must have been for the radio broadcasted a baseball game. They rose, and from her purse she paid the man who had waited on her, dropping the money in a hard yellow hand he extended out to her.

When they had nearly reached home, their sons met them in the market truck. They stopped the truck, and the older one shouted, "Say, where were you? Don't you think we want to eat sometimes? Where'd you find the old sot?" But she saw her husband not look at them. Instead he went straight ahead past their shouting. She smiled and patted his arm. "They've been killing the roosters," she explained happily.

The very first thing she did after they arrived home was to put the big pot with potatoes on the stove. Then she went back to her husband who sat at the littered table on which the sons had prepared their own meal. Mechanically she started picking up things while he went on prattling about his trips, first with the same old gusto, later subsiding to a repetitious monotone, until he was asleep. She sat down across the table from him and watched his open mouth and the tobacco stained teeth in it. She looked fixedly at his red flowered neck-

tie lying upon the soiled white shirt. Like a gash in the neck of a white rooster. She continued staring at it, and felt anger fly through her beyond all control. She rose and shook him, but he yawned uncomprehendingly. Not till the brushy end of the broom scratched into his face, did he rise. He cringed laughingly away from her. "You're an awful old fool," she scolded. "Running away for days and the whole town talking. Leaving me to tell them you're only visiting. You old fool. Now they're gonna slit your throat like a rooster. But they're not gonna slit your throat. I'll kill you first. Nobody's gonna touch you except me." She kept on striking away at him until he took the broom from her hands. "You're strong," he panted. "Catherine, you're strong, woman."

Then she sobbed and ran to the kitchen where the big potful of potatoes bubbled and boiled and rumbled. "Look, what are we gonna do with all them potatoes? Look," she wailed.

He pressed her old arm and kneaded his fingers gently into the flesh. "Why, we'll have a picnic, Catherine. Just you and me," he told her drowsily kind.

"You old fool," she scolded again and led him to the couch. One minute later he slept and she spread her apron over his face against the flies. Then she went back and looked at the potatoes.

ESCAPE THE HOUNDS!

LUCIA TRENT

Why let our lives be tuned to a rusty horn?
Why keep our faces turned toward winter wind?
Oh, let us sail where swarthy men are born
To love beneath the flowering tamarind.

We strain our lives through sieves of artifice,
Who hurry here and there with burdened minds
While always close to the shadow-stained abyss
The sharpener, Death, forever starkly grinds
The knives of doom. Enough! Call off the hounds
Of circumstance that bay our petty tracks!
Oh hasten to where the pulse of laughter pounds
And we can feel the sun upon our backs!

I will build me a tower of emeralds
 From the stretched green backs of chain-frogs.
 On its top will I station, as beacons,
 The lanterns of a panther's eyes.
 They will search for your face in the west,
 Unforgotten and bleeding with blossoms,
 With the patience of moon-trapped tides,
 And the vigor of new-born suns.

I will call to my tower of emeralds
 When the dawn goes black at the sea-line,
 A brood of the hill-bred eagles,
 Grown hungry for the horns of the storm,
 They will swoop to the clouds of the west,
 With the speed of whip-cracking lightning,
 In search of your face that is gold,
 Which Apollo flings over the hills.

And ever the trembling star-flowers,
 And the hemlocks that weep in the clearing,
 Shall be proud of my tower of emeralds,
 Wrapped close in the arms of the rain.
 For the eyes of the panther, unsleeping,
 Shall burn in their prison of darkness,
 Shall burn with the sting of hot iron,
 Through the years that are hiding your face.

I will build me a tower of emeralds,
 From the bright-leaping green of the chain-frogs,
 To stand till the roots of the years
 Cleave deep in the bosom of frost.
 It will search for your face in the west,
 Unforgotten, and bleeding with blossoms,
 Till the last white skull-bone is dust,
 And the dead moon falls in the sea.

CLIFF BY THE SEA

NORA HEFLEY MAHON

The sea wraps eager arms
 About your defiant form
 And croons snatches of songs,
 Murmurous with love,
 Or scolds in passionate fury . . .
 Seeking to draw down your face.

How long before you soften
 To these blandishments
 And crumple in her arms . . .
 Your head upon her breast!

ABRAHAM LINKUM

DAVID BERNSTEIN

Abraham Linkum was de planters' foe,
Abraham Linkum was shot at de show.
(That on the first day of January, in . . . 'sixty-three,)

Abraham Linkum was daid at sebbin,
Abraham Linkum, he went to hebbin.
(all persons held as slaves within any state,)

Walkin' up dere, where de cherubim ran,
Abraham Linkum met a nigger man.
(or designated part of a state, the people whereof)

"Hiyah, Abe," says de white haired black,
"Yuh looks right well, and dat's a fac'."
(shall then be in rebellion)

Abraham Linkum says, "Who are you?"
His face was smilin', his eyes was too.
(against the United States, shall be)

De nigger says slowly, voice lak a sword,
"Abraham Linkum, I'se de Lord."
(then, thenceforward, and forever free.)

A PRAYER

GRACE KEMMERLING WELLINGTON

Let others sit on the righthand side
and wear a jeweled crown—
give me a little, lonely star,
the least of your many, God—
to dwell with my love
and the lowly ones
whose loss have grieved me so . . .
to call by name these lowly ones,
and stroke a high-arched back:
caress a small, rough head
and read in sparkling eyes
an eager loyalty . . .
a brown thrush singing in a tree—
a swirl of waving grass—
a cricket strumming at twilight time . . .
that will be Heaven enough for me—
a place where my four-footed brothers
share a tiny star with my love and me,
far from the singing hosts
and the crash of majestic sound . . .

PORTRAITS FROM A GARRET

DONALD J. PAQUETTE

The Last Carrot

Mournfully, you lie there upon the naked shelf,
cursing the gods like a cheated harlot—
your shrivelled flesh
longing for a touch of the good cool earth . . .
There, upon the dusty shelf where roaches crawl
like curious rats over your pallid form,
and onions shed their scaly skins
like sneaking snakes in a desert waste . . .

There, upon the lonely shelf
awaiting your turn—
praying for me to come with the rusty old knife
and finger your limp form
and feel your feeble pulse;
waiting . . . waiting . . .
for the bloodless surgery of the tin blade
that shall fall upon you at last like a guillotine
and sever your once proud head—waiting
for the merciful knife
that shall carve your flesh into yellow threads—
threads of sheer magic—
threads, from which shall be woven
three golden cloaks with fleecy linings—
for the little naked children of my dreams.

The Radical

Vengeance, lurks around his deep-set eyes
like a beaten dog, and shadows his hungry face . . .
his incorrigible hair, bleached by myriad suns,
is charged with Lenin and the 'five year plan' . . .
His head is full of pamphleted replies—
Marx, is his god, and Engels and the rest:
red-radical—a would-be communist,
he paints his classless brotherhood of man . . .

At night, he takes his jug of wine to bed,
and ere one peaceful hour has passed away
one half of hell, rolls down the avenue:—
The nation, trembles—the gutters flow with red
thick blood of capitalists . . . the stock exchange
blows up . . . and there's
Mellon, with a pick—Morgan, his throat cut . . .
And thus he dreams the loud red night away,
until the bread-line stretched its long lean arms—
O Christ! another day!

PORTRAITS FROM A GARRET—continued

The Intruder

The evening took off his cotton coat
and walked peacefully down the radioed avenue . . .
Casey and I were about to sit down to the last carrots;
I had driven the coffee into the cracked cups
and was reaching for yesterday's scattered loaf
when suddenly
the floor groaned and fell like an old man on a wet pavement;
the wooden walls shook like an old washer,
while from above, plaster fell like snow flakes,
followed by the thunder of rolling bricks
down the shingled roof . . .
Dishes fled frantically like slippery fish
from the cupboard's quivering shelves—
while bleeding Jesus beside the bed
swung on the cross like a beaded pendulum . . .

This, I remember—and then
silence took a deep breath . . . and after
women's screams, my record-breaking heart—
Casey's cardboard face, the sirens, and the dark.

America to You

I once knew you, America,
when time was worth a man's last dollar!
Your cheeks were rouged a rosy red,
music was in your voice—sweet promises;
your step was sure, you knew no fear
and your face was smiles from Maine to Florida.

You were my land of dreams, America!
the idol of my star and striped heart;
I trusted you as a little child would trust
its own sweet mother—for you were big and strong, it seemed,
and good to me, and I was young and innocent;
and that was years and times ago,
when days were fair, and men were men—
but you and I have changed since then, America!

I am no longer a child, America!
nor have I brought with me a child's faith,
nor the faith of my fathers—nor hopes
that once were mine; these, I have forgotten,
you will find them along many a bitter way—
but I remember, America—remember your promises!

I have seen you my country, 、
sweet land of liberty,
(Auburn-Haired Jesus! do you hear?)

wrapped in your Uncle-Samied cloak,
 with silken hat and polished shoes,
 sell politics on ignorant street corners;
 you, smoking your long cigars,
 while little children starved in back bedrooms;
 while little children cried in want
 of food that you had much to give—
 whose fathers died that you might live, America . . .
 and I have seen old men, fathers and grandfathers,
 with twisted spines and beaten brows
 whose once undenying hands
 gave you the gold you hoard today—
 seen them, thrown like old shoes
 from Main street restaurants,
 who had no silver disc to pay, America!

I have traveled a long way, America!
 I have seen much
 and much do I remember!
 I have seen you, my country,
 still the hearts of innocent men,
 and hang their torn bodies like butchered hogs
 from the limbs of old trees:
 hear me, O Christ! their skins were black!
 I have seen you crucify a thousand souls
 with a Caesared signature!
 I have seen you bargaining with old women
 for the sake of their last dollar,
 and strangle before my very eyes
 the frail form of justice . . .

I have been one of your boys, America,
 one of 'the four million'—
 I have loved you with the love of an only son,
 and I have been ever faithful . . .
 I have marched with you through foreign fields,
 seen dawn—and bloody sunset—better days,
 and now . . .

Yes! I have come a long way, America!
 I am no longer a child,
 nor have I brought with me a child's faith,
 nor the faith of my fathers—nor hopes
 that once were mine—these
 I have forgotten!
 But I have seen much, America!
 and been many places—
and much, shall I remember!!

PORTRAITS FROM A GARRET—continued

To an Old Book of Poems

O canvased-cloaked messenger,
sweet-syllabled embalmer of the dead,
whose whispering leaves are autographed
with the fossils of a thousand thumbs;
O thou, whose worn words I caress
with a mother's tenderness—
you alone, dear friend, you
are the one I love.

And though you have been ravished by a thousand hands—
still, there upon the table before me, with folded arms,
your faded cloak drawn tightly over your proud shoulders,
your back lettered like a school boy's slicker—
you fill the room with a loud and lingering silence . . .
Motionless, there upon the wooden pedestal
you stand like a phantom prophet
about to address a great audience . . .
Dominate . . . solemn . . . statuesque . . .
like a little child's Jesus—or
like Napoleon
at Waterloo!

To an Old Door

Again, I reach for your calloused hand,
warped sentinel of my dreams,
here, where the last stair lifts the hall,
and fetch from my fringed pocket the rusty word;
again, I greet you after the day's worn places—
with empty arms . . .

Another day, old friend, has come our way
and drags his dusty feet down the faded stairs,
leaving us alone—
here, among the wombed weaver's lacy works—
here, where thoughts linger like ungathered eggs
and time sulks like a scolded child in dark corners;
here, where a thousand journeys end
and the hours fall like peas from a drowsy pod;
here—where the world's inveterate greed
sits like a horned demon upon the cupboard's barren shelves:
here—but wait, lest I should loose, old friend,
among my crying concerns, some worthy thought—
hear me!

Thanks, old friend, for everything:
your patience, your fortitude,
your wooden will,
your myriad services.

PORTRAITS FROM A GARRET—continued

Thanks, for standing there through the long dusty hours,
for guarding me with a mother's eye
and my little dream children left in your care;
for passing me in and out these many times—always
with a smile upon your wrinkled old face,
though your scaly form moves heavy
with the weight of forgotten years.
Thanks, for muffling the noisy mouths that infest the street,
for turning back the wind and my neighbor's garlic,
for blunting the icy bayonets of the night—
for this and that, and a thousand forgotten favors—
and last, lest I should forget
for clinging like an old turtle
to our many secrets . . .
For all of this old friend, believe me
I am thankful.
May the Great Founder bless your splintered soul
and may you rest in the hall of faithful doors—
Forever!

A Burned Match

Futile and done
as a sun-struck leaf,
you gasp for breath—
your flame-strewn blood
transfused into the anemic air . . .

Your fleshless spine
droops now like a withered weed,
curving a crude charred question-mark—
which writhes with prophetic irony
into an ominous silhouette—
against the pale motionless body of a new-born poem.

The Auburn-Haired

. . . Silently, the watchers went their way
in solemn thought—their eyes upon the ground—
as evening, gathering her shadows from the sand,
whispered to Night—Time's Treasured Tragedy . . .

Day followed day into eternity . . .
The flesh, left to the sun's rays
melted like wax from the bearded face,
revealing here and there, a bone's edge,
licked by the warm winds . . . Tumultuous flies
questioned like buzzards the dripping carcass—
feasted and flew away, and came again . . .

PORTRAITS FROM A GARRET—continued

Before the dark, upon the thirteenth day,
from some far-distant tree,
a lone bird aired its ragged wings against the evening sky—
rested a while upon the matted head,
and gathered a few threads of falling hair . . .
Thus, in slow silence, rotted the abandoned thing! . . .

And this was ancient years ago . . . The wind,
whispered her long lost lullabys—while the skeleton
rattled like castanets
and fell, bone by bone, upon the burning sand;—
fell, one by one, like wrinkled apples
from the frosty fingers of a winter tree—revealing
the rusty nails,
which clung like hollow teeth to an old jaw—
weakened, and fell at last from their hammered holes,
save one, which fastened the slender neck—
it alone remained,
clinging with an iron will to its driven place—
defying Time, and Time's three sentinels—
as onward, from his phantom citadel,
the years marched slowly by . . .

. . . And here, each weary round,
the pallid moon, pursuing her sleepy way,
would lower her ancient lantern and call the night;
pointing prophetically her phantom hand
to a falling cross—a few ungathered bones . . .
for centuries . . . until at last
A Savior—rose from silence and the sand!

CRYSTAL LAURELS

MARGARET SCOTT COPELAND

I felt the clammy touch of Fame and knew
His breath upon my brow; my song was stayed—
I saw before me paths of silence, laid
Upon the future, leading down the blue
Of centuries beyond the present. Strew
The aisles of soft content with petals made
Of silk, but cast them far beyond the shade—
The blooms of Fame are not of mortal hue.

A mind cannot bequeath but what it sows,
Nor can a heart disclose the soul of all
The universe unless the mortal foes
Bow willing knees of serfdom—dreams that fall
Outside the realm of mind. But all that flows
Within—is captive king to those who call.

SECRETS OF THE GODS

By William Eulberg Kelm

Mr. Kelm is a graduate of Columbia College in Iowa where he received his B. A. He is a pianist, organist, and composer, and, besides his splendid short stories, which have appeared in such journals as Pagany, This Quarter, and The Windsor Quarterly, collaborates with his brother in the writing of plays. Mr. Kelm lives in Dubuque.

CRIED Ann, "Everything's ready, Mama. Is Conta dressed? Are you dressed, Mama?"

Mama's voice seemed tired and a little nervous as it came down the nice white staircase. "Almost, dear. Are the cakes pretty? O, it just won't do. It's the weather, I guess. O Ann, could you come up and give it a turn? . . . the hair, I mean."

Ann, her hearty face flushed pleasantly, ran up to Mama.

Mama wasn't strong. Most of the responsibility of the house fell to Ann. That's why Ann hadn't insisted on going off to college after high school. She didn't care much about books anyway.

Conta was active like Mama had been once, before Mama evolved into her present gently-complaining passivity. But Conta wasn't active about houses and things. Rather, she was active inside her, Ann guessed.

"There!" said Ann, and Mama's hair was done.

Mama didn't seem to notice. She said quietly, "If only I could be sure Conta is really happy this time."

Then they both remembered how Conta had broken her last engagement two days before the engagement tea. The talk, the recalling of invitations. Ann smiled a little bitterly. Conta got all the beaux, and she didn't deserve them. She had only to half close her violet eyes and look out a bit cloudily from under the heavy blue lids, and she was as good as engaged to whatever man happened by. It seemed as though Conta must be in possession of some secret of the gods.

Mama said, "You know, dear, Conta is always expecting to be *perfectly* happy, and when she finds out she can't be, she doesn't know how to accept it casually." Something dim and far off was in Mama's eyes. Ann wanted to forget about the engagement tea and sit and really talk to Mama about things she had never delved into before. "Mama, tell me about yourself when you were young," she said, sitting on Mama's lap.

For a moment Mama covered her long delicate face with her hands and said nothing. Then she uncovered her face, and her eyes were out the window, lost somewhere in the sweetness of the catalpa trees. Then she said quickly, "Mama must get down to her guests now, dear," and gently pushed Ann off her lap.

In her room Conta watched her thin sensitive lips form the word "engaged" and sent it into her reflection in the mirror of the dressing table. No more searching for a completely different man. She had found him. A poet with glowing brown skin and golden hair and ebony eyes.

Then something asked her if Orion were so different after all. Now that he was in the ordinary world he had never known. No sooner had he come and met her people than he spoke of getting a job, so that he would not be totally dependent on her father after they were married.

She had told him not to be absurd, that he was a poet and she'd hate him selling vacuum cleaners.

"Then we must leave this world of yours where money means everything,"

SECRETS OF THE GODS---continued

he had said.

"No, it's possessing you in such a world that I love," she had said. "In your own world you would cease to be the extraordinary being you are here."

He hadn't understood.

Conta crossed to the window. Already her people were causing Orion to become practical and ordinary, like her father. Even his hair was getting darker, his skin lighter.

Then she left the window and threw herself across the bed. But she didn't cry. Tears were too eloquent for what she felt. "It's something in me that's the cause of everything," she decided. "If it were cancer, they could cut it out."

DOWNSTAIRS, Orion sat looking at his shoes. They were getting shabby. If only he could sell one of his poems right away, so that he could get some new ones. Funny how things like shabby shoes disturbed him now.

He gaped nervously. This afternoon he would have to meet many people. He hated it. After avoiding people all his life, it was too late to like meeting them. He wanted to see no one but Conta, but it was not to be as he wished. He had no money, no power. He was Conta's slave. Her father's money would keep him well groomed, keep him writing poetry. If only he could hate her. He was afraid that one day she'd hate him. She had said, "I want to marry you *now*, before I get sick of you."

Ann stood before him. She smiled up at him like a child, her brown bob slightly tousled. She was all there at a glance, clear untroubled. "Oughtn't we two get to know each other a little better?" she said.

"Of course we should," he said seriously. "I could learn a lot from you."

Ann felt lightheaded. "I—I don't understand," she said.

"You love your life," he went on. "You love every little thing in it. How do you do it?"

Never before had a man made Ann

feel so important. She looked up into Orion's eyes, and something inside her took hold. But she remembered what Mama had told her about Conta and said, "I'm always consistently casual."

Then everybody was coming, and the rooms hummed with voices. The air was heavy with fragrance, and Mama seemed a trifle faint. "Is everything all right? Is it going nicely?" she asked Ann every time she passed her.

"If only folks would sit down," said old Mrs. Burleigh, "they'd talk more natural."

"You never sit at receptions and the like," said Mrs. Vanderbeely. "You're not supposed to stay that long."

"Well, I'm not going until I talk to Ann. I want her to meet my nephew. I always said the man who gets her . . ."

"You might make a match if he weren't on his way to South America," said Mrs. Vanderbeely.

Then Conta came up on the arm of Carr Burleigh.

"Well, I declare," murmured old Mrs. Burleigh, "here I bring Carr to be with Ann, and Conta grabs him up!"

"Your nephew has been telling me all about Cerro de Pasco," said Conta to Mrs. Burleigh. "Only fifty white people, imagine! And away up in the clouds. How thrilling, how different!" She looked up into Carr's eyes. "O how I'd love to be going with you." Her eyelids were half closed now. The violet of her eyes was misty, cloudy.

He was looking down at her. Something caught in his throat. Then his aunt said, "Come, Carr, I want you to meet Ann."

"Why, I thought *this* was Ann," he said, his face flushing quickly.

"You see, we introduced ourselves," said Conta, "and before I could specify I was Conta Brenn, he had insisted I was Ann." She laughed.

Carr didn't laugh. His eyes looked hurt.

"Besides, had I told you I was Conta, you'd have been so formal . . . nice boys always are with engaged women . . . and I didn't want you to be formal."

Mrs. Burleigh and Mrs. Vanderbeely exchanged glances.

ANN was pouring tea in another part of the room. She loved to make people happy by feeding them. Who was that big ordinary-looking boy Conta was monopolizing? Something was familiar about that tight brown hair, those laughing blue eyes, that football face. Then she remembered Mrs. Burleigh showing her nephew's picture. He had played quarter-back with Harvard and had just graduated. Mrs. Burleigh always said when he came . . .

Ann got someone else to pour for her. She was excited. She was meeting a man intended for her for the first time. "But I must be casual," she said to herself, remembering what Orion had done to her but a few minutes ago.

"Ann dear!" cried old Mrs. Burleigh. "This is Carr."

Ann gave Carr her hand, looking up at him through half closed lids. But he was looking at Conta. No use trying to be casual now.

"Now you two run off and get acquainted," said old Mrs. Burleigh, "and Conta, come sit down here and tell me all about this man of yours."

"I must find Orion," and Conta hurried away. She found Orion and threw her arms dramatically about his neck. Then Ann suggested to Carr that they go out into the garden.

"Can't we get out of here?" begged Orion of Conta, "just to breathe?"

Conta was angry with Orion. She didn't know why. His intense miserable face among all the merry ones seemed suddenly to pull at her like a great weight. Suddenly she didn't want him "different". She wanted him intensely ordinary in an extraordinary

place like Peru.

She looked towards the doorway through which Carr Burleigh had just passed. Then she looked back at Orion. "Come, let us dance," she said, suddenly wanting to forget the dull hurting throb she and Orion were making of their love because they wanted it more than it really was.

Conta and Orion started in on a fox-trot. Orion danced very badly, but Conta didn't mind. She was too occupied with her thoughts at the moment to care how many times Orion stepped all over her feet. "I'm frightened," she kept telling herself, in perfect time with the music, "I'm frightened."

If only she could talk to someone. But Ann was too young, Papa was too busy, and Mama would just look pained and hurt.

She thought until this afternoon that she was living on a higher plane than most people. But seeing everybody again, with Orion among them all, she began to wonder if there wasn't only one real plane of living for everyone.

She was conscious of people watching her and Orion. "Aren't they the striking couple though? What a happy girl Conta must be! It's too divine!"

"O hell," said Conta almost aloud.

"What's the matter?" said Orion peevishly.

"For God's sake, let's stop," said Conta.

"A splendid idea," said Orion, wiping his forehead with his handkerchief.

"Excuse me, please," said Conta breathlessly, and she left Orion.

"O I'm an ass," she said to herself over and over as she paced her room, "I'm an ass." She went through it all again: how she always thought she must marry a man different from ordinary men, so that marriage wouldn't degrade her. A friend had told her about Orion. Then she had read his letters which spoke of the higher life. She had idealized Orion, and one day

SECRETS OF THE GODS---continued

wrote to him. They had corresponded regularly after that. He had come to see her. Then she had broken her engagement to Captain Bartlett, forgetting his uniform which for a time she thought was different. It had been the same with others too, they were different only for awhile. Now she was right back to the beginning. The most ordinary man would be the most different person in the world to her.

Mama finally found her and said, "Come, Conta, people are going home, and they're asking for you. Whatever is the matter, dear?"

"Just a little headache, Mama, that's all." Then she hurried out of the room.

Mama stood for a moment, thoughtful, concerned, then followed her daughter down to their guests.

ANN and Carr Burleigh came in from the garden. With a little thrill down her back, Conta noticed that there was still something hurt in his eyes when he looked at her.

"I suppose my nephew will be bothering you a lot these days," old Mrs. Burleigh told Papa, who had just come home for supper.

"Fine, fine," said Papa. "We love the young folks around."

"But I'm afraid I'll have to be pushing on tomorrow," Carr told them without looking up.

Old Mrs. Burleigh was indignant. "Why, Carr, you promised . . ."

There was an awkward pause. Then everyone said goodbye and went away. The great room had that sick after-party look.

Mama gaped, said how exhausted she was, complained of the mussy room.

Papa walked about whistling, testing a cake here, a handful of almonds there, trying to make conversation with them all. Papa couldn't understand. He worked hard all day, came home

to his family feeling peppy, and they were all worn out from just having a pleasant afternoon at a party.

Ann had gone upstairs. She wanted to be alone. Carr Burleigh didn't care for her. Even when he had taken her hand, he was thinking of Conta. Conta must beat her always. But what was the difference? Carr was off to South America. Conta was marrying Orion.

Ann felt a little sick. Then after awhile she felt a little glad. Perhaps one day when Carr returned and found Conta married, he might turn to her whom his aunt had intended for him. She wasn't entirely undesirable, she guessed. More than once this afternoon she had caught Orion staring at her.

Downstairs Mama said, "I wish Ann would come down and see to the clearing away. Nora will have everything in the wrong place. O Ann, Ann!"

"O Mama, please let's have a little quiet," said Conta nervously.

"I better go," said Orion.

"I guess you better," said Conta. Then she kissed him quickly and went up the stairs.

MAMA began picking up. Papa went to the kitchen to grab some supper.

Then Mama took hold of Orion's arm. "It's been a hard afternoon for you, hasn't it?" she said sympathetically.

"O no," lied Orion.

"I once knew a boy like you," Mama said. "I loved him very dearly, but I didn't marry him."

"Why?" said Orion.

"Well, you see, I idealized him. I tried to be his kind, the sort his environment and ancestors and traditions made him. But I also had my environment and ancestors and traditions which, beneath all my outer pretense, were as active in me as his were in him. So after years of having delighted in

capturing unusual men, making them mine, learning them thoroughly only to see there was nothing really different about any of them, I rebelled and ran off with the most ordinary man I could find. He was so obvious I would never have to bother learning him. There would be no chance for disillusionment. You see?"

"I see," said Orion, startled, disgusted, bewildered.

"Ideals are splendid things, Orion, but I'm afraid they haven't got very much to do with the reality of everyday life. It takes more courage than I've got to live a higher life. It takes more than Conta's got. How much courage have you got, Orion?"

He bit his lips and looked about the room vaguely. Then he said, "I-I don't know. I was so sure once. As I am, I don't fit here. I hate it. If I were to become as Conta, you, your people, I'd hate it too. I love Conta. What is there for me to do?"

"My dear boy," said Mama, quietly bracing herself, "don't you know?"

Orion regarded Mama for a moment with intensity, then said, "I must get free of Conta before—before . . . O I suppose you'd call it saving ourselves from each other." Then he turned abruptly and left the room.

"Orion, come back here. You must not take me seriously. I was merely

talking," cried Mama in sudden panic.

But Orion didn't come back. Mama knew that he'd never come back.

Suddenly that other day was heavy upon her, and that boy who attained the other life. She remembered his dark curls, and how she had sent him away too.

Papa called, "Where did Ann put my pipe to?"

"I'm going to bed," said Mama. "If young girls are tired, what do you expect of an old lady like me?" She gaped long and with abandon.

"That's right, leave me alone," grumbled Papa. "When my family does condescend to stay at home of an evening, they run off to bed."

Mama didn't listen. She never listened to Papa.

She dragged her tired legs up the stairs, to her room. She took off her clothes and slipped into her nice cool nightgown. She wet her fingers and braided her hair. She sat down before the open window and felt the night spread about her. Everything within and without settled. How nice the catalpa blossoms smelt.

Her head nodded, and in her half-dozing she wondered why nothing was quite as we expected it. Why was it that everything was either more, or less, or something entirely different?

ABANDONED FARM

JOHN C. ROGERS

There is the old graveyard,
and briars
thick upon the stones
bowed over sinks,
and stubby boxwood
dark and droll as
any friars,
and the cedar branches in a
million kinks.

There is the old house
in a ruined heap,

and lizards on the beams
hand-hewed and still with
marks of axes,
and I rub my eyes as if
from sudden sleep I wake
to find the old home eaten up
by worms and taxes,
and all my childhood falls
before me as a dream, or like
a drunken man
relaxes.

BLACK LILACS

A POETIC PLAY

JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

A large wire fence divides a trampled plot of ground and a cultivated lawn. Behind the fence is a large white lilac bush, silhouetted against the blue of the sky. Once in a while, a wisp of grey cloud, the remnant of smoke from the factories far below in the valley, passes by as lazily as a soft little feather that has fallen from the breast of a hawk.

At the rise of the curtain, The Girl is discovered gazing reverently at the white lilacs. Her eyes are veritable pools of worship. She is spirituelle and utterly free of artificiality. The Lady, who does not appear until shortly after the opening speech, has the same tender qualities as The Girl, but her eyes, weary pools of worship, are haunted. Her hair is prematurely grey, and even her grey garden smock hangs dejectedly.

THE GIRL

My perfect flower, even in the night
You must reveal your loveliness, your white
And fragrant gown.

THE LADY

(suddenly appearing on the other side)

My dear, why don't you take it?

THE GIRL

(startled)

I did not know—Oh, please, I wouldn't break it!
I only meant to touch it—nothing more:
Believe me, lady . . .

THE LADY

(snapping off a branch)

But that is what it's for.

THE GIRL

(timidly refusing)

You're very kind . . .

THE LADY

Then take this little flower.

It's nothing. Look! They're higher than a tower.

THE GIRL

(reluctantly)

I can't accept from one I've never known,
My father said.

THE LADY

(bitterly)

And only from your own.

THE GIRL

I mean—I mean—he hates white lilacs so.
But why he does I cannot guess.

THE LADY

(reminiscently)

I know.

THE GIRL

Then you are wise . . . No matter how I tried,
He would not say—

THE LADY

(*daringly*)

Perhaps he had a bride.

THE GIRL

Aunt Mary said my mother has been dead
For several years.

THE LADY

And what have you been led
To know, what deeds, what hidden thoughts about her
Since she has gone?

THE GIRL

We've been so long without her.

THE LADY

And though she's—dead—does she return to you?

THE GIRL

Aunt Mary does the deeds that mothers do,
But doesn't give me lilacs white as these.
A long, long while ago I had them.

THE LADY

Please

Remember everything!

THE GIRL

I know my mother
Would take me to our lilac bush and smother
Our faces there.

THE LADY

Is that all you can tell?

THE GIRL

Only father's words.

THE LADY

What?

THE GIRL

"This is hell."

I never saw my mother from that day.
The road of death must be a lonely way,
For father hacked the lilac bush asunder.
Perhaps they grew on mother's grave, but thunder
Had stolen part, for next day in the gutter
Black lilacs lay. I heard my father mutter:
"Both should have been there when he saw this place."
And then he cried and death was on his face.
He said strange words, as, "He can give her more
White lilacs, wealth and beauties by the score."
And then he took me in his arms and pressed me

BLACK LILACS—continued

So tightly I could hear his heart; he blessed me.

THE LADY

(to herself)

Poor man, he loved me more than I deserved.

(to The Girl)

And then what did your father do?

THE GIRL

He served .

Us both until Aunt Mary came to aid.

Her words are false: she'd rather be a maid

Than live in splendor in a house like this

Where "even summer wind's an evil kiss."

I came up here today and disobeyed

Aunt Mary, but I'm not a bit afraid

To face her since I've really touched the sky.

Our place is low and soiled, yours is so high!

THE LADY

And does your father hate high places too?

THE GIRL

Just like Aunt Mary.

THE LADY

What must you pursue?

THE GIRL

Only father's way.

THE LADY

But that's unfair.

THE GIRL

I may when I'm beyond the childhood stair

Take my own road.

THE LADY

You mean you'll go away?

THE GIRL

My father said that I may go to stay

In lilac-scented rooms atop a hill.

Aunt Mary sadly spoke: "Perhaps she will."

THE LADY

You love high places, don't you?

THE GIRL

Oh, I do!

No one has ever understood but you.

The factory dust rules every inch below

This hill: that's where my leaping heart must go.

I want the colors dying in the west,

I want to free the robin in my breast,

I want white lilacs growing everywhere,

(Everyone has purple blooms down there.)

And no one understands my singing brain.

I cannot crouch behind the window pane.
And love the world as it goes quickly past.
I want the year from beginning until the last.
And always I am guarded and protected.
Are they afraid? Perhaps I am suspected.
I'm one who buries a secret in the heart.

THE LADY

Oh, tell me, please!

THE GIRL

I don't know how to start.

THE LADY

I know! There's something in your heart that leads
You past the homeliness, beyond the weeds.
Though others brand your pilgrimage as bad
And though you leave them worrying and sad,
The fragrant forces lead you and reveal
A pageantry your life cannot conceal.
And though the climbing up the hill is slow
And fears accompany you, still you must go:
Only to touch the fragrant soil and air,
Only because you must, because you dare!

THE GIRL

How did you know?

THE LADY

Because I too have climbed,
Because I sought in vain the song that rhymed,
And found the fragrant lilac bitter-sweet,
Because the life behind was not complete.

(extreme bitterness)

The seed's deserted and an evil promise kept;
Sad is the heart where desertion and hunger crept.
Because of a broken vow my heart is sad,
Because I worshipped *this*, they called me bad.

THE GIRL

And *I* have broken a pledge, but is it wrong?
Is it evil wanting, praying, living a song?
If we but break our promises in spring?
Now I shall go, but I shall come to sing
When your white lilacs bloom again.

THE LADY

Oh, stay!

THE GIRL

Another spring and I'll return to play!
(she kisses The Lady and flees)

THE LADY

(wearily, longingly)

So far she is, so far she is,—so near.
Three hundred sixty-five—a year—a year . . .

The PREDICAMENT of the MODERN

By Carl Edwin Burkland

The article by Mr. Burkland published in our Winter number was so controversially received by Mr. Musser, the two of them resulting in so many letters pro and con, that we were pleased to see a further exposition of his thesis by Carl Edwin Burkland—written in the same "spirit of friendliness, but in quite definite disagreement".

IT will hardly be disputed, I think, that a great poet is an expression of two things: himself—wherein lies his originality; and mankind. But mankind as conditioned by all the influences that give a special character to the age in which that poet lives. History demonstrates not only the continuity of man, but the striking discontinuity in the cultural patterns time has brought forth. We do not and cannot think as the Greek, the medieval ascetic, the eighteenth century rationalist, or the nineteenth century romantic. Indeed what we speak of as education is, in the last analysis, very largely the acquisition of an intimate knowledge of the varying and often contradictory cultures that have preceded our own.

It is obvious, too, that every age tries to express life in terms of universal truth; and that every age succeeds in presenting us only its own peculiar and characteristic understanding of truth. If it is an age homogeneous in its life, brilliant with character and genius, it may create a sharply defined, original, and compelling culture. It will take its place in history as a "great age." Each such great age offers us a persuasive "way of life"—well-knit, harmonious, and sufficient for that age. But for no other. In our own tradition we may cite broadly, for instance, the pagan, particularly the Hellenic world; the Christian world succeeding to it and largely authoritative until the Renaissance; and the modern world, with its gradual recession of Christianity and its emergence of a predominantly scien-

tific logic, dating, according to Whitehead, from the seventeenth century.

Philosopher, saint, and poet are inevitably conditioned by the intellectual climate in which they live. From it they draw their sustenance; it finds in them its highest and most representative expression. Christianity could not have produced Aeschylus and Aristotle; nor could the Greek world have produced Dante and Thomas Aquinas. And neither could have given us Goethe and Nietzsche.

The Greek and Christian worlds were both favorable to poetry, though for different reasons. The sweet sanity of the Greek, the essentially poetic trust that is Christianity could offer to poetry no militantly hostile elements. But with the modern world the situation begins to change. We see the progressive rise of a non-mystical reason, and the complementary decline of mystical faith. Both religion and poetry suffered at the hands of eighteenth century rationalism, but not too severely—science was still in the theoretical stage of its development. In the nineteenth century, however, science came into its empirical own: its cumulative observation, inference, and experiment dealt a body blow to the spiritual ego of man. We hear its echoes in the literature of the second half of the century; we have its exposition in the materialism of such men as Buchner and Haeckel, and in the philosophy of Nietzsche; we find the spiritual loss to man epitomized in Arnold's poem, "Dover Beach".

THE PREDICAMENT OF THE MODERN---continued

And what of the twentieth century? Christianity is already a dated mythology. Its ethic is obsolescent; its cosmogony as antiquated as that of Hesiod. Man is left to draw such comfort as he can from the realization that he is a minor chemical and physical episode in the brief life of an unimportant planet. It is pleasant to hear Mr. Musser speak of the eternal verities that remain constant amid all stress and strain. But alas, what are they, and where are they! If we in the twentieth century are impressed by anything, it is the fact that truth is a local and temporal matter. History itself is but a panorama of outmoded truth.

The present day poet is caught in the interim between a long accepted and convincing world-view which is no longer tenable, and a world-view still to be made. This, I reaffirm, is his predicament. It is as illogical to exhort him to return to God as it is to ask him to believe that the world is flat. It is illogical, because he cannot. Nor can he talk in the grandiose terms of the nineteenth century, booming confidently of the divine event toward which creation moves. Nor can he offer us a sentimental egoism. Neither corresponds to the world we know.

We know the animal origin, nature, and destiny of man. We know that he is a confused mixture of the good, bad, the silly, the obscene. We know that in the interval between two silences he has a miscellaneous set of experiences that make him weep, laugh, love, cheat, fight, and dream. Out of his fear and ignorance he creates gods whom he worships; out of his desire for continuance he creates worlds in which he may still live; out of his human egoism he creates a soul that he refuses to share with his blood brothers of the animal

world. Mysterious but not mystical, he lives with others of his kind, important to no one in the universe but himself. Out of nothing but his own experience emerges the art structure called philosophy, the wish-fulfilment called religion, the practical tool called science, and the beautiful satisfaction called poetry.

The advent of science does not, of course, tell the whole story. We are only too well aware of the forces related to it that have made this an age of chaos—of social, economic, domestic, political ideals long cherished, spinning in a welter of confusion.

The effect on the contemporary poet is obvious: he has no integrated spiritual background of belief in which he can create. He cannot express the soul of the age, because, properly speaking, it has no soul. That is yet to emerge. To affirm, then, that poetry at present represents a decay in spiritual authority is not to damn it, but merely to relate it—as it inevitably must be—to the general temper of the age.

Nor is it to be pessimistic with regard to the future. As man has in the past from the life force within him created patterns of belief from which he could draw strength, inspiration, and security, so, it is fair to assume, he will continue to do. But I can see no reason for believing that this new world-view will be that symbolized by Mr. Musser in a "return to God." Rather—since it can do no harm for one of his lesser creatures to prophesy—I shall venture to predict that it will be a faith stressing man, not God; and that its poetry, strictly rooted in the here and now, will be an expression of the strange, rich, and beautiful in our own life, accepted as such, and implying no truth transcending our own mortality.

Truncations

'The time has come,' the Walrus said,
'To talk of many things:
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—
Of cabbages—and kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings.'

—LEWIS CARROLL

. . . As we understand it, the "little" magazine fails in its first purpose if it does not introduce new names. Quite a few words have been said lately about editors of the "little" journals being as selective in their choice of names as the editors of the commercial and better literary magazines. There is, however, something to be said on both sides. It is naturally a betrayal of the "little" policy to print only big—"little" names; but it is equally unwise—and unfair to the writers—to fill a magazine with unknown names merely *because* they are unknown, to introduce what might be a promising career with mediocre writing. With this idea in mind, our poetry has always been a straddling of the known and the unknown. The same policy we hope is going to prove practicable with our short stories. Since we are limited to only two stories per issue, we hope to be able to present in each of these issues a worthwhile offering by both an unknown and a known name in the "little" magazine field. The policy of course remains subject to the quality of material submitted . . . Some may find it consoling to know that Heine's sole payment for his first book of poems was thirty free copies . . . And sometime we might get up enough energy to write an article on the lack of critical judgment—or was it jealousy?—evidenced by our great poets. The latest to come to our notice is Goethe's total indifference to the before-mentioned Heine volume . . . After a hectic interim, *The Windsor Quarterly* is publishing again from Commonwealth College, Mena, Ark., the same editors in charge. Fred Maxham writes us the policy is unchanged (see FANTASY Summer '33), though the format,

owing to college printing facilities, may be different . . . With the end of its first year, *The Bard* is forced to discontinue publication, a victim of the NRA Printers' Code . . . Harriet Monroe of *Poetry* leaves August 20th for a four-months trip to China . . . Coming from a critic whose judgment we have always respected, a statement such as that recently syndicated is a distinct disappointment. Dr. Phelps of Yale tells us that formerly all lines of poetry began with capital letters. "There are some poets today," he writes, "who begin all the lines with small letters; this seems to me unfortunate, for now it is impossible to tell whether they are writing poetry or prose." We agree with Dr. Phelps that bizarre externals do not make poetry, but such a sweeping statement as that quoted would remove from poetry many of the best things being written today. We believe it was Amy Lowell who said: *Only a vigorous tree has the vitality to put forth new branches* . . . Add to the prison papers worthy of support *The New Day*, published by the inmates of the Ohio State Reformatory at Mansfield, Ohio . . . Charles Brockden Brown was the first man in America who attempted to live by his pen . . . *The Literary Magazine*, prose and poetry, with which *The Outlander* is combined, can be reached at 223 Davis Building, Portland, Oregon . . . Irl Morse's bright *Better Verse* is now published at Cabin in the Pines, Akeley, Minn . . . Ralph Cheyney, whose work both *in* and *for* poetry needs no introduction, has been appointed poet laureate of Pennsylvania . . . Note on a Pittsburgh book page: *Morley Callaghan, the young realist whose novel of the poor white trash down*

South, "God's Little Acre," was turned into the fine drama of "Tobacco Road," has turned to an even more poignant theme in "Such Is My Beloved." Now, let's see, who was it wrote "Little Women"?—James Joyce or Dos Passos? . . . We are informed that in the early days, Maxwell Bodenheim smoked a white pipe, sometimes decorated with a large knot of baby blue ribbon . . . Is there anyone to compete with Margaret Anderson for rapid book reviewing? Her record is a hundred books in three hours. And we spend hours and hours . . . If your artistic appreciation is not limited to literature, send to Peter Keenan for a copy of *The New Hope* at New Hope, Penna. Originally devoted solely to pictorial art, it now embraces all the arts, and provides some intensely interesting reading. Recently we sent Editor Keenan a batch of our magazines; a few days later came the reply: "Unable to open your packet until the other night—12:30 A. M.—thought I'd glance at them hurriedly on my way to bed to get some sleep before making a 7 A. M. train to New York. It was 5 A. M. before I left the magazines (curse you); I missed my train" . . . Add to the before-mentioned prospective article on poor critical—or jealous—poets: Longfellow's failure to acknowledge a group of Lanier's poems . . . The first issue of *The Literary Workshop* is worthy of the best that can be said. It is published at 229 West 28th Street, New York, N. Y., and devoted to the work of student writers in colleges and universities throughout the States. It boasts a delightful format . . . Milton received only ten pounds from the publishers of *Paradise Lost* . . . The Kelm brothers, Karlton and William, have issued the first copy of *The Dubuque Dial* at 75 West 17th Street, Dubuque, Iowa. All the contributors to this first number, including Josephine Herbst, Raymond Kresensky, Meridel Le Sueur, and

others, are Iowans. Whether they'll continue to be so limited we don't know. Very nice format . . . *Point* is another literary quarterly published at 214 N. Park Street, Madison, Wis. The first has some striking verse . . . Kent Good-nough Hyde writes in *Westward*: "In all probability the English language knows no greater ballad than *Sable and Marigold*, to be found in the Spring issue of FANTASY, and we have a deep regret that this mighty story is not already available to us in book form." Perhaps extravagant, but gratefully received by Mr. Doughty and ourselves. We think we can safely promise an early book publication of this work . . . Mr. Hyde is, by the way, *Westward's* new editor, and publishes from 545 Sansome Street, San Francisco, Calif. Though remaining the same in format, the Pacific Coast journal is a little less conservative and always a pleasure to see . . . The July *Writer's Digest* carries a complete list of verse markets . . . *Writer's Review*, 647 Forest Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio, is going to publish a monthly poetry page, Neil Drake, editor . . . And we might as well warn you now if you're not interested in new literary and poetry magazines, don't bother finishing this. Or if you'd rather we didn't devote space in this manner, please let us know . . . Mimeographed but better than most others is *Hub*, stories, poetry and articles, 2010 Washington Avenue, SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa . . . *The Medallion*, 2055 Creston Avenue, Bronx, New York, N. Y. carries a little of everything . . . *The Little Magazine*, 727 Greenwich Street, New York, N. Y., features Ezra Pound in its latest . . . Paul Pfeiffer wants exactly what his title says in *Characters*. The address is Branciforte Drive, Box 624, Santa Cruz, Calif . . . *Left Front* is the revolutionary organ of the mid-west. 1475 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill. is the location . . .

UNDERNEATH THE BOUGH

Anyone attempting Eleanor Feree Noxon's task in *Rubaiyat of the Twentieth Century* (Dorrance and Co., Inc.—53 pages) is deserving of praise, although the result in each of the ninety-four quatrains is not as uniformly happy as in that original *Rubaiyat* first published anonymously in 1859. Many have since essayed translations of Omar and it is to Miss Noxon's credit that hers is probably as good as any done since Fitzgerald's. The difference in them all lies in that Miss Noxon and the others have been content to be mere translators of the Persian, while Fitzgerald's translation—or, rather, paraphrase—is so free and highly flavored by the Englishman's own genius that the *Rubaiyat* was perhaps more Edward Fitzgerald than Omar Khayyam.

Miss Noxon has captured very well the philosophy of the original, voicing successfully the hedonism, the deification of pleasure which was the Tent-maker. Her lines themselves are generally good, failing only in the final sublimation that would lift them to Fitzgerald's level. In the oft-italicized quatrain, "A Book of Verses underneath the Bough", she does not do so badly with

For Here with You, beside a little Brook,

*A loaf of Bread, a little Wine, a Book,
A faithful Love at Night, a Kiss at Morn—*

No better Paradise—whatever Road we took.

But in other instances such as these, in Miss Noxon's book,

The Lion and the Lizard hover 'round their tomb,

Their Palaces fallen and they forgotten soon;

Where Bahram hunted and where Jamshyd drank,

Their graves are buried in an endless gloom.

And if you see a Rose, or vivid Tulip bed,

'Tis red because there, once some blood was shed;

Some ancient King there died to gain renown,

And where the violets bloom, lay once a Beauty's Head.

you realize that Fitzgerald has reached the ultimate in distinction.

*They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;*

And Bahram, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass

Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

I sometimes think that never blows so red

The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;

That every Hyacinth the Garden wears

Dropped in her lap from some once lovely Head.

But, taken all in all, Miss Noxon's little failure is overshadowed by her great and meritorious attempt.

It is unfortunate that the state which lays certain claims, not of birth but otherwise, to Poe and Lanier should have produced no more promising a group of poets than the forty-eight contemporaries included in *Maryland Poets* (Henry Harrison—160 pages)—unfortunate particularly for the publisher for this collection is the first weak link in an otherwise strong chain of state anthologies. Unlike the Georgia and District of Columbia anthologies, the present collection contains very few good contributions and really none distinguished. The better pieces are contributed by Maria Briscoe Croker, who also writes the Foreword, Lilian Sue Keech, and William Sheppard Sparks.

Six of One (The Kaleidograph Press—106 pages) stands unique among poetry anthologies for the consistently high standard of its selections. Such

volumes almost without exception are by their very nature uneven in quality—the good offerings tempered with a multitude of lesser ones. *Six of One* is different because Joseph Joel Keith, the compiler, probably invited the eleven poets who, with himself, make up the collection—and Mr. Keith is that rare being, a good critic and judge of poetry as well as a first-rate poet himself.

The verses range from the poignantly tender "This Green, Small Hour" of Dorothy Cowles Pinkney to Walter R. Adams' pitiful "To a Dead Tree, Standing" to Dorothy Marie Davis' clever arboreal "Nudism" (FANTASY—Spring '33). Helen Frazee-Bower appears with a group of six sonnets and the compiler with six pages of his best work. The other contributors include Kathleen Sutton, Katherine van der Veer, Patrick D. Moreland, Daniel W. Smythe, J. Horace Losh, Dorothy Quick, and Littleton Todd—together representative of the best that is being done today.

A good many years ago, James Francis Cooke, editor of the *Etude*, wrote me that musical people wrote a great deal of poetry with which he was constantly being deluged, so for that reason he had stopped completely the publication of poetry in his splendid magazine. The good editor doubtless knew—as I do now—that the poem I submitted to him wasn't much good. The incident comes to mind now with a reading of Will George Butler's (Mus. Doc.) *Destiny and Songs of the Heart* (The Christopher Publishing House—76 pages). It is not at all rare to find literary people also good musicians on the side, but it's very, very rare to find one who is primarily a musician also a good man of letters. To say then that as a writer Dr. Butler is a good musi-

cian is not meant to be nasty, but merely a statement of his calling.

The poems herein included bear too much the effect of having been written with the express purpose of being set to music—they do not sing in themselves. After all, the words of the greatest songs in the singer's repertoire are of little worth when considered alone. Excluding Shakespeare, Goethe, Heine, Schiller, and Scott who supplied some of the words, how many poets lending their art to Schubert do we know? The immortality of any song lies in its music, not its lyrics.

Dr. Butler has undeniably high ideals and aspirations, but he does not express them in distinguished poetry, whatever the quality of his music.

There is something fleeting about the talent of H. Nelson Hooven in the group of poems collected under the title, *Rig Veda* (The Lawhead Press—96 pages). We can no more pin down his poetic characteristics than we can label the moods of his poetry. There are times, it is true, when certain isolated lines appear awkwardly and purposelessly obscure, and yet the effect of the poem as a whole is somehow vaguely achieved.

One might only have wished that a few more trivial pieces had been removed. Selections like "A Poem" and "In a Lemon Grove" suffer too much by comparison with "Unfinished", although the majority of the poems exhibit qualities greater than their words convey.

It is only fair to say that John Rood, the designer, and the Lawhead Press do exquisite work, marred here only by the consistent error of an apostrophe in the possessive *its*. Illustrations by the author and Yu Chun Chow add to the charm of the book.

PROSE REVIEWS

Holland has given the world very few novelists—Maarten Maartens being the only one coming to mind at this moment

—but with *Belly Fulla Straw* (Alfred A. Knopf—321 pages), it has presented us with a writer of genuine quality,

David Cornel DeJong, whose promise was first sounded in a series of poems and brilliant short stories. It will be unfortunate if any implications in the title prevent anyone from reading Mr. DeJong's novel; for it is, all in all, a first novel one cannot afford to miss. (The title, by the way, is part of a taunt flung at the immigrant Dutch children of Harmen Idema, the book's leading character: *Dutchman, Dutchman, belly fulla straw, Can't say nothin' but ja, ja, ja.*)

The plot itself is slight, our chief interest lying in the splendid development and portrayal of Harmen Idema's character. We first see him in 1914, on the deck of a vessel bound for America. Five years later, his wife, Detjen, dies, leaving him with the upbringing of four small children, only one of whom fully remembers the old attachments and understands him. The others, as they grow older, betray him by becoming too quickly Americanized, too easily acclimated to surroundings and conditions Idema is not ready to accept. Idema wants to sit with his children and sing Dutch songs; but Rolf, the oldest, becomes quickly Ralph and marries the smug, condescending Evelyn of the "made-to-order laugh" and the "turn the-other-cheek look" who, belonging to later-generation Hollanders, is grateful for being "saved from the ignominy of having been born in the old country". Idema wants to tell Dutch stories; but Gerda rapidly becomes Gert in the new country and gets herself seduced by a weakling, who is content to live off the Idemas until Harmen finally sells the house from under them. Dirk is nonexistent; only Ka, his younger daughter and favourite, is content to sing the old songs and listen to the old stories. But here, too, Idema's pleasure is tempered with the pious Evelyn's innuendoes of fixations and perversions. "For the children he had planned and built all those little fences, and now the fences hemmed him in and left him apart from others, while the children seemed to be on the verge of wandering outside."

Idema is a figure of lonely walks and few friends, though he is liked and constantly advances in the building trade. There are three faint episodes with other women, anyone of which could have assumed major proportions, but Mr. DeJong was not so minded. The women do not more than touch Idema's life; he was not ready to admit that "another woman is always more satisfying than a green dike with sheep". One of these feminine contacts is nothing more than a symbolized hatred for Evelyn combined with his fear of losing Ka. The only real happiness lies in fleeting moments with Ka. Contentment alone is not sufficient; "If it had been," he is told, "you would have married again."

A letter from Holland suggesting his return brings to Idema his greatest problem. Thus the book moves on to an end splendidly motivated by Idema's character, a man whose whole philosophy of living is contained in a few words: "All I'm trying to do now is to let people have their own way, their own rights and thoughts, in order to keep my own intact, and for that they'd willingly cut my throat."

His philosophy is well shown in his unpleasant task of punishing the children. When Rolf gets home late from school, punishment is deferred because "first we have nice fish for dinner, though. We can't spoil that, can we, Rolf?" And, after Detjen's death, when his daughter is explaining the embarrassing situation of a male guest in her bedroom, he is only annoyed—"What concern was it of his, and why should this silly bothersome oldest girl of his, with all this explaining, force the paternal and authoritative upon him? Why couldn't she leave him alone even in her little filthy trespasses?" So his concern is with his peace, his live-and-let-live philosophy. "I'm going for a walk," he finally announces to them. "No, I have nothing to say to you two. You know what you want. You have your own minds, haven't you?"

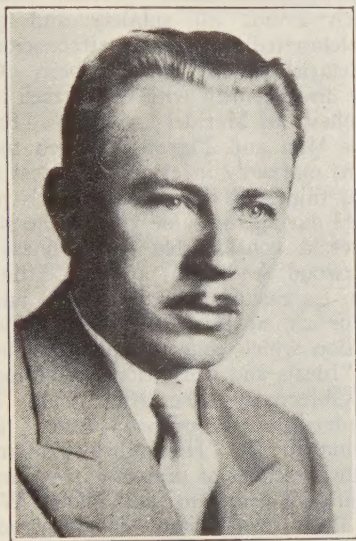
Mr. DeJong writes us that the first part of his novel is autobiographical.

We wonder—in no disparagement of any part—if this is up to the appearance of Evelyn. Up to this time, at which point the story actually begins, it is a masterpiece of quiet, sustained writing.

The quiet mood is particularly evidenced in the second chapter which, considered apart from the whole, is a perfectly rounded short story, deserving of a place beside the same author's "So Tall the Corn", printed in *Scribner's* several years ago. The chapter is a forecast of the loneliness that is to be Idema's; even beside Detjen he feels

bine to make up one of the best passages in modern literature.

What might have easily proved an obstacle has been made the strongest arrow in Mr. DeJong's quiver. Coming upon a new language after he had known the old (he came here at the age of thirteen), he found words were new things, not blindly accepted in wornout associations heard from birth. Thus there is a verbal freshness in *Belly Fulla Straw* found in very few native writers. Mr. DeJong is an artist who knows what to say and what not to say—and, more than this, says what he does in a new way.



DAVID CORNEL DEJONG

it. Leaving her bedside at the beginning of the chapter, Idema walks through Meerdum, the town of his birth; it is a last farewell to the town he loves and which Detjen, with her lack of sympathy with the fisherfolk, had not accepted. The picture is unbelievably real with the women clattering lonely along on their wooden shoes, going to the dike, looking for sons and husbands who had never returned from sea. The greetings with a few friends, the farewell glass at the inn, the few strained words with his father, and the return to Detjen at the close—all com-

Short Story Hits 1933 (Harcourt, Brace and Company—390 pages) marks the second in the series of short story anthologies begun by Thomas H. Uzzell in 1932. This series is proving a very welcome addition to the other two story anthologies now being published annually, and should prove to have a wider appeal. For Mr. Uzzell's appeal is twofold—either to the one who reads merely for pastime or to the student. If you happen to be looking for several hours of entertainment—and here too your varied tastes are considered—the present 1933 collection contains twenty first-rate short stories. But, in many respects more important is the appendix of close to a hundred pages of critical notes on the stories Mr. Uzzell has selected, suggestions for study, and various other notes on the short story in general—in all a meaty and important hundred pages.

In point of content, Mr. Uzzell's story selections are closer to those of Mr. Hansen and the O. Henry Memorial Award Committee than to Mr. O'Brien's selections. The difference is that Mr. Uzzell is interested more in the story as entertainment and in its salable form. To this end he gives a cross-section of the best that is being done in all classes of short fiction, dividing his selections into four groups—all fiction, big circulation, literary, and experimental; while Mr. O'Brien's choices are, almost without fail, in the two

latter categories. The chief point of variance is that Mr. O'Brien wishes to help form and develop new literary movements; Mr. Uzzell wishes impersonally to record and interpret them—in short, explain what it is in the new stories that makes them what they are. And in this we come back to the student appeal.

Of the four stories reprinted from the pulps, we found particular interest in William Corcoran's "Manhattan Midnight" (from *Black Mask*); though it holds for us little narrative interest, it is notable for its employment in a strictly action medium of the hard-boiled objectivity first used, as Mr. Uzzell points out, by Hemingway, and developed in the detective story by Dashiell Hammett. Also in the all fiction group is Albert Richard Wetjen's "In the Tradition" (from *Adventure*), a powerful narrative of the sea.

From the big circulation field Mr. Uzzell selects five stories. George Bradshaw's "The Fire in the Flint" (from *The Saturday Evening Post*) is the brightest of these, with some remarkably fine dialogue and its setting of an old theme amid old surroundings to produce something startlingly new. Grace Zaring Stone's "Scapegoat" (from *The Delineator*) is a splendid tale, of a high literary finish not too frequently found in the big-circulation magazines.

Seven stories are taken from the literary group. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' "Benny and the Bird Dogs" deserves a place on a shelf of genuine American humour—good for as many laughs now as we originally enjoyed from a reading of it last year in *Scribner's*. This and George Milburn's "The Catalogues" (from *Harper's*) and Lowry Charles Wimberly's "Censored" (from *The American Mercury*) are outstanding examples of the short story as it is now being written in America. George Milburn's piece, unlike most novel fragments as this is said to be, is a short story in its own right, drawn with the fidelity to truth and the genius for native expression and humour which

make its author the master of the short story today.

The experimental magazines appear with four selections, which for the most part show how important Mr. Uzzell considers the present proletarian trend in literature. Only one of these four, Vardis Fisher's "The Mother" (from *The Frontier and Midland*), has no proletarian leanings. Whatever his sympathies, however, Mr. Uzzell makes clear that his "concern is with esthetics not ethics." Of the remaining three stories in this group, Fred R. Miller's "Happy New Year" (from *Blast*), which avoids all subtlety and goes wholeheartedly and unselfconsciously proletarian, is by far the best. Our only disagreement with Mr. Uzzell is in his choice of Meridel Le Sueur's "Fable of a Man and Pigeons", which to us seems markedly inferior to at least two other things of this same author's published during the same year. The story shows a considerable indebtedness to Sherwood Anderson, and too little of Mrs. Le Sueur's own individual talent.

For us, at least, the eighteen page division which collects under the heading "Ideals and Definitions" such topics as Objectivity: the New Cult, The Murder-in-the-Woodshed Story (referring to the "Hemingway-Faulkner-Caldwell school of undressed realism"), What Is Naturalism? and Should Writers Turn Proletarian?—is alone worth the price of admission. These brief essays succeed well in illustrating certain vagaries of the modern short story, illuminating the subject (where volumes have failed) in a few succinct pages.

Although the collection shows a keen awareness to new trends and an appreciation of today's best, the appendix shows just as clearly an understanding of all the ground that has been covered by the short story of the past. All in all Mr. Uzzell is one of our most brilliant and acute commentators on the short story today, drawing on a splendid understanding of the past to develop an appreciation and understanding of the present.